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New York

*President:* Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.*

**Agenda item 45** (*continued*)

**The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/499)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/50/482)**

**Draft resolution (A/50/L.17)**

**The President:** In connection with the item before the Assembly, I want to inform members that the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the third report of the Director of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala is contained in document A/50/482.

I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.17.

**Mr. Pallais Arana** (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured, on behalf of the delegations of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua, to open the debate on the item "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development".

Only a few years ago, Central America was a region overwhelmed by social upheaval, war, authoritarianism and the dominance of military might over civil society.

Only a few years ago, our region was a focus of the East-West conflict, and much of the cooperation it received from outside and a large proportion of our national budgets were earmarked for military expenditures in the region. This had the effect of deepening military conflict and bringing about economic and social decline.

Just a few years ago, we, and perhaps many of the other members here, were sceptical about the possibility of Central America enjoying democracy, peace and freedom on the road to sustainable development that proclaimed the dignity of the human being as one of its main objectives.

Today we are deeply gratified to see that the efforts that we in Central America and the international community have made to build a new Central America have dispelled this scepticism. Today we are convinced that the enormous efforts invested in finding a solution to the crisis in Central America have not been in vain, nor are we back where we started, with another conflict about to ignite.

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Throughout the gradual transition, the summit meetings of the Central American Presidents have institutionalized the process of regional integration and have given concrete form to the commitments undertaken in Esquipulas II, in which Central America pledged to struggle for peace and eradicate war, to ensure that dialogue prevailed over violence and reason over rancour, to give impetus to real democratic processes, and to promote justice and respect for human rights.

Today we can say that in the 1990s, with the end of the cold war and the breakdown of totalitarianism, an unprecedented opportunity presented itself to change the course of history and, for the first time, to secure the values of a democratic, just, peaceful, civil and reconciled society, with Governments brought to power by the freely expressed will of the people.

When, in December 1990, the Central American Presidents declared Central America a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development, there was also some scepticism about that. Nevertheless, it was not simply a rhetorical declaration. At that time, we were conscious and fully understood that we were undertaking an ambitious, far-reaching and detailed project.

In considering the question of Central America, the General Assembly has been witness to the developments in the situation in our subregion. The international community has been able to ascertain through its own experience and at various summits that the Central American Presidents have signed agreements that take account of the interdependence of peace, development and democracy.

The new integration of Central America is a fundamental and indispensable instrument for regional development and hence for ensuring peace, security and democracy in our region. In this context, the main priorities in Central America have been defined, not only from the political and economic but also from the social standpoint. Today Central America has defined its new regional strategy in the Alliance for Sustainable Development in Central America. This new strategy was agreed upon in the Declaration of Guacimo approved in Costa Rica in August 1994 and the document signed at the Managua Environment Summit in October 1994, and at the International Conference on Peace and Development, held a few days later in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

We think we should also bring to the Assembly's attention the signing at the sixteenth meeting of Central American Presidents, held in El Salvador in March 1995, of the Treaty on Central American Social Integration, which, as an integral part of the new Central American strategy, is aimed at giving priority to social matters so as to ensure sustainable human development.

As a complement to the legal bases and values of the integration process in the new Central America, the Central American Presidents have proposed to discuss at the impending summit, to be held in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, an agreement on democratic security — namely, security in its integral sense — an agreement based on the conviction that full and effective democracy is the best means for promoting trust between nations and citizens.

The new principles of regional integration are based on respect for life in all its forms; constant improvements in the quality of life; respect for the vitality and diversity of our land; peace, participatory democracy; respect for and the promotion and protection of human rights, and respect for the multiculturalism and ethnic diversity of our peoples; the economic integration of our region with the rest of the world; and a responsibility that spans generations for sustainable development.

Within this new plan for regional integration, the new Central American Integration System (SICA) is the basic framework for such integration, as a means to harmonize efforts in the economic, social, cultural and political development spheres in Central America in order to consolidate the interdependence of democracy, security and development, inseparable elements of a new pattern of Central American security. For this, Central America wishes to thank the General Assembly for granting observer status to the Central American Integration System (SICA) on 12 October 1995.

In our efforts to ensure peace and sustainable development in our region, we can say that in Central America confrontation and military solutions to conflicts are a thing of the past. We believe in the application of the principle of the peaceful solution of disputes, in dialogue and in negotiation. Central America favours and supports international law. In this spirit, Central America supports the good-offices role of the Secretary-General and the development of United Nations peace-keeping operations within the framework of the Agenda for Peace.

An example of this is the work of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the

Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), which, according to the Secretary-General's reports, has witnessed the agreements reached by the Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) on matters of human rights, indigenous populations, socio-economic matters and the agrarian situation. We are certain that the Guatemalan people will be equal to the task demanded by the times and that the negotiating process in which they are involved will be successful.

In El Salvador, the process initiated as a result of the peace agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional is still moving forward, and its success has contributed to the progress in the transition the country is experiencing. We are pleased with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), which shows support for the efforts the Government of El Salvador and society at large are making to finalize the outstanding aspects of the peace agreements.

In Nicaragua, the experience of the support group made up of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, in accordance with resolutions 48/161 and 49/137, has shown that the United Nations is able to take innovative initiatives to support the processes of transition to peace, democracy and development; this is shown also by the adequate levels of technical and financial support given to our country in the preparation of a strategy for national development.

At the International Colloquium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies, held in Austria in June 1995, it was stated that there must be a broad response to a country's needs in consolidating peace after a conflict. This was a particular challenge for the United Nations system, whose main objective is the integration of activities much more than the simple coordination of activities. At that Colloquium, emphasis was placed on giving a human face to the process, as well as on the situation and the standards of living of peoples whose lives had been devastated by the war and who had had great expectations of a "peace dividend".

Central America can only agree with those observations, since in the past the concept of peace did not have an integral characteristic nor did it have the dimension and scope it now has; it was limited, at various times, to the ending of conflicts.

The Secretary-General, by introducing in his Agenda for Peace the new element of the consolidation of peace after conflicts, has brought an important critical vision to the global framework of United Nations activities for peace. By introducing this new concept, he has broken the old model that limited United Nations activities to the mere cessation of hostilities and the ending of armed confrontations.

As the Secretary-General has stated, it is now a question of dealing with the very causes of the conflict and not merely with their superficial manifestations. We must now put an end to the deeper roots of crises — economic despair, social injustice and political oppression.

Once again, Central America bears witness to the fact that these concepts can become a reality. Central America is convinced that our region offers the conditions necessary to make it a model for the solution of conflicts — solutions by which peace and democracy are consolidated through integral developments and through political settlements that include the elements necessary for establishing the interdependency of "An Agenda for Peace" and an "An Agenda for Development". This task has not yet been concluded.

Central America feels that just as the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) and the Economic Cooperation Plan for Central America (PEC) served as an example to be applied in other situations, Central America will also be a successful example of what the United Nations can do, with the support of the international community and while respecting the sovereignty and independence of States, in the field of consolidating peace and using preventive diplomacy to end conflicts.

International assistance and cooperation for consolidating peace and facilitating development in support of the Alliance for Sustainable Development in Central America — the subject of the Secretary-General's report in document A/50/534 — provides us with an adequate framework for the United Nations and the international community to continue to cooperate with Central America.

To conclude, we wish to acknowledge once again that on the road we have travelled we have not been alone and that the contribution of the United Nations, the international community and, in particular, those

countries that have constantly supported us, has been essential in consolidating peace in our region.

In presenting the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.17, we wish to direct the Assembly's attention to the new strategy for sustainable development in Central America, to the provision of support for the peace process in Guatemala, to the consolidation of peace in El Salvador and to the economic and social reconstruction of Nicaragua, as well as to Nicaragua's request for observers for the electoral process in 1996. At the same time, we wish to bring the Assembly up to date on the most recent efforts undertaken by Central America in the peace and regional integration processes.

We have gone most of the way, and yet much remains to be done to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. We insist on the need to overcome extreme poverty, for which greater efforts are required. We hope that in this task the international community and the United Nations will continue their cooperation with Central America and that the draft resolution that we have submitted will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Albin** (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Mexico has very close and fruitful relations with the countries of Central America. We are bound not only geographically but also by close historical and cultural ties. Central America has always been of prime importance in the international affairs of my country. We have followed with particular attention the positive developments which have taken place in the region in recent years, and we welcome the determined efforts of the countries in the region to strengthen their institutions and to achieve firm and lasting peace.

The signing in Mexico City by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Nacional Revolucionaria Guatemalteca (UNRG) of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous People, and the negotiations to conclude an agreement on socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation constitute very important progress in the peace process, and they deserve the international community's support.

Given the importance of the present electoral process in that country, we also welcome the Contadora Declaration signed by the Guatemalan political forces last August in which a commitment was made to ensure that the Government that resulted from the elections would respect the agreements negotiated to date by the present Government and the UNRG.

The extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) last September is a clear expression of the international community's continuing political support of the peace process in Guatemala. The Mission's work has been very positive. It is widely recognized and respected in Guatemalan society. MINUGUA must continue to have the capacity and the facilities to fulfil the mandate given it and must continue to contribute to strengthening the national institutions and entities entrusted with promoting and protecting human rights in Guatemala. We are confident that the necessary measures will be taken to apply the Mission's recommendations.

Peace is an essential component in confronting economic and social challenges. Dialogue and negotiation are excellent mechanisms for achieving this end. We urge the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to redouble their efforts and to demonstrate their political will to accelerate negotiations. The speedy conclusion of an agreement on a firm and lasting peace is in the best interest of both parties, of Guatemala and of the United Nations.

Exceptional progress has been made in El Salvador. The peace process is proof today of the political possibilities that open up when the will of the parties exists. It is also the successful result of international support for the Salvadoran people's efforts. After years of violence and uncertainty, El Salvador is today in the stage of consolidating the peace process; of building and strengthening its political, economic and social institutions; and of perfecting its structures so that, through dialogue, it can harness the plurality and the differences inherent in all contemporary societies.

The international community, through the United Nations, is fully committed to continue to support El Salvador in its consolidation of a lasting and durable peace. The international community's commitment to peace, stability and development in that country was recently reaffirmed by the extension of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL).

Mexico appreciates the work done by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in El Salvador through MINUSAL. We recognize the Salvadoran Government's commitment to completing the implementation of all pending matters of the peace

agreement and we encourage it to persist with this objective.

We are convinced that progress in political and institutional areas in Central America will be achieved only if it is accompanied by similar progress in the area of economic development, as well as by a decisive endorsement of the reconstruction of the social fabric of those nations.

We are well aware of the efforts made by the Nicaraguan people to counteract the consequences of war and natural disasters. We consider the support given by the international community to Nicaragua for economic and social reconstruction to be of particular importance. Mexico will continue to participate in the Nicaragua Support Group and in bilateral cooperation.

The international community's support for Central America must be strengthened now that the countries have taken decisive steps to attain peace. Central America requires financial resources and technical support to rebuild and consolidate political, economic and social institutions.

Mexico will continue to fulfil its commitment to contribute to a lasting peace and to the development of the region. We will do this in a most positive spirit in the areas decided on by the Central Americans themselves.

**Mr. Murayama** (Japan): It is recalled that the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was established in 1991 to help guide El Salvador towards the creation of a society in which democratic order, the rule of law and respect for human rights would prevail. It successfully completed its tasks this past April. Looking back at the history of United Nations peace-keeping operations in Central America, beginning in 1989 with the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and followed in 1990 by the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), both of which were in Nicaragua, and then by ONUSAL in El Salvador, I believe we can confidently proclaim them to have been enormously successful.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay high tribute to the peoples of El Salvador and Nicaragua, whose strength of will and indomitable spirit made the ideals of peace and democracy a reality in their societies. Let me also commend the various United Nations organs and agencies for their innovative and very effective efforts to fulfil their important mandates.

In an effort to build upon the success of peace-keeping operations following the completion of their mandates, the Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Central American countries agreed at the United Nations Headquarters this September to establish a Japan-Central America forum to promote dialogue and cooperation on a range of issues in political, economic and cultural areas. Japan hopes that the forum, to be convened once a year, will help it gain a greater understanding of the real needs of the region so as to ensure that its cooperative efforts are as effective as possible.

As I mentioned earlier, thanks to the enthusiasm of its people and the assistance of the United Nations, El Salvador has continued to make progress in building a democratic society, particularly since the successful general election that was held there last year. This is not to say, however, that the implementation of the peace agreements has not been fraught with problems and delays. We have yet to see, for example, the full deployment of the National Civil Police and the complete demobilization of the National Police. Nor has the redistribution of land among the former combatants been finalized.

In this context, Japan strongly supports the efforts of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL), which, under the able leadership of Mr. Enrique ter Horst, commenced its work this past May to follow up the international peace-keeping effort in El Salvador. I should like to emphasize on this occasion that the valiant people of El Salvador need and deserve continued assistance from the international community as they rebuild their country. Japan, for one, is providing ever greater support for that effort. It does so in the conviction that through their unwavering commitment to peace and democratic principles, the people of El Salvador will demonstrate to the international community that the concept of peace-building is in fact a viable one.

The vigilant attention and consistent efforts of the international community are required in other parts of the region as well. I should like in particular to touch upon the situation in Guatemala, which has seen the longest conflict in Central America's history.

Negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) are being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. While progress in those talks has been uneven, we are encouraged by the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human

Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), and by the signing of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous People. The presidential-election campaign is now entering its final stage. In just a few days, on Sunday, 12 November, the election will finally be held. It will represent the culmination of patient and protracted efforts over the past 30 years of all the parties concerned.

In view of the significance of this election, Japan has decided to contribute a grant of $100,000 to the Organization of American States (OAS) to be used for election-monitoring purposes. It will also participate in monitoring activities, coordinating its efforts with OAS. It is Japan's earnest hope that this election will create an atmosphere that will be conducive to further and speedy progress in the negotiations so that a final peace agreement may be concluded and ready for signing early in 1996.

Japan highly commends the United Nations, and particularly MINUGUA, as well as the members of the Secretary-General's Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, without whose efforts such progress would not be possible.

I would be less than candid if I did not acknowledge the fact that numerous obstacles remain on the path to peace and democracy in Central America. But we must not be discouraged. Rather, we should redouble our efforts to overcome these problems by combining peace-keeping and peace-building activities in new and creative ways.

It is in this context that Japan is extending various kinds of medium- and long-term cooperation to the countries of Central America, including yen loans, general grant aid and technical assistance. It has also responded promptly and generously to the need for emergency relief in the wake of natural disasters that have occurred in the region. Should any new emergency arise, Japan stands ready to provide assistance, in the belief that its assistance not only facilitates economic development and provides humanitarian relief, but that it helps to advance the peace process and ensures that any progress will be irreversible.

I wish to conclude my remarks today with a word of gratitude to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the indispensable role he has played in the struggle to restore peace and stability throughout Central America. The coordination of United Nations efforts with the initiatives of like-minded countries in the region has demonstrated new ways in which peace-keeping and peace-building may be effectively combined and has provided a model for future endeavours in this area. I should therefore like to urge the United Nations to continue to pursue its innovative peace-building activities in the region, for I believe that through its experiences in Central America it is gaining valuable lessons for the maintenance of peace and security in other parts of the world.

**Mr. Fedotov** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation notes with satisfaction that after many years of armed conflict and instability Central America is today at the stage of consolidating the peace process, strengthening democratic institutions and economic revival. Despite considerable difficulties, the process of national reconciliation and democratization in the Central American region is, on the whole, proceeding successfully and has already led to a considerable relaxation of tension there.

The tangible progress achieved in Central America has been made possible to a large extent by the efforts of the international community and, first and foremost, by those of the United Nations. We believe that the peacemaking experience gained in Central America deserves careful study and that it should be applied in other parts of the world.

The Russian Federation takes a positive view of the activities of the United Nations missions in El Salvador and Guatemala and supported the further extension of their mandates. We welcome the constructive cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) and other regional organizations on this question.

The Russian Federation is pleased and gratified by the success of the peace process in El Salvador. The experience of the 45-month multipurpose peace-keeping operation has shown that tolerance and perseverance in seeking paths to settlement and reaching agreements can succeed in resolving the most complex and protracted conflicts — provided, of course, that the parties involved genuinely desire to achieve a durable peace.

We note the generally constructive course of implementation of the Chapultepec Peace Agreement, which has furthered the trend towards a logical stabilization of the situation in El Salvador. At the same time, certain unresolved problems remain. The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the fact that a comprehensive approach to post-conflict peace-building

is now required in El Salvador, with close cooperation between El Salvador and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other United Nations specialized agencies and international financial institutions.

Notwithstanding the remaining complexities and the recurrent outbreaks of violence recently seen in Guatemala, the signature by the Government and the leadership of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) of a whole series of agreements has created a real basis for success in achieving a peaceful settlement in the near future in that country. The most important requirements for further progress are the strict compliance of both parties with the obligations they have already entered into and the taking of decisive and effective steps to ensure the protection of human rights, and in particular the safety of the civilian population. We hope that on the basis of the agreements reached, and with mutual goodwill, the Government and the URNG will do everything possible to reach specific agreements shortly on the unresolved issues that remain. In this connection we call upon both parties to complete the process of national reconciliation by signing the relevant documents during the term of the present administration — that is, prior to January 1996.

We welcome the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua to consolidate civil peace and to improve the socio-economic situation in the country. The resolution of the recent political differences between the executive and legislative authorities has demonstrated the country's desire and ability to find solutions to the remaining problems. The important point now is to ensure that all necessary conditions are met for the general elections to be held in Nicaragua in accordance with the time-table set out in the Constitution, which will further enhance the regular evolution of the democratization process.

The Russian Federation welcomes the positive impact on the situation in Central America of the growing political and economic cooperation between the countries of the subregion within the framework of the Central American Integration System, and the new momentum given it by the decision to meet in October of this year at Costa del Sol, El Salvador. The Russian Federation supported the proposal that the Central American Integration System be granted observer status in the General Assembly and was one of the sponsors of the resolution concerned.

At the same time, it should be noted that the stabilization process in the subregion is still proceeding at an uneven pace. Many of the social and economic problems that were formerly the cause of conflicts remain to be solved, and there is evidence of serious political difficulties and of deliberate resistance on the part of certain radical groups. The world community must continue to afford effective assistance to the Central American countries in averting new outbreaks of tension, in ensuring that the processes of national reconciliation in the subregion are irreversible by creating solid democratic bases for State structures, in strengthening the climate of political tolerance, in the strict observance of human rights, and in their economic recovery.

The Russian Federation has repeatedly put forward initiatives designed to strengthen international support for these processes in Central America. We have stated our readiness to participate in the demining of former war zones being carried out in the Central American States under the auspices of OAS. The Russian Federation is prepared to continue to provide assistance in the final settlement of the problems of Central America and to cooperate actively to that end with the countries of the subregion and with all interested extra-regional States. We also favour the further strengthening of the United Nations role in that peacemaking process.

The Russian delegation is grateful to the representative of Nicaragua for having introduced the draft resolution (A/50/L.17) under the agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", and we are prepared to consider it favourably.

**Mr. Laclaustra** (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union is following with great interest the situation in Central America and is pleased with the progress that that American region is making year by year towards the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development, so that it can emerge as an example of harmony and integration for the rest of the international community.

The peace initiative of Esquipulas, advanced in 1987, paved the way for mediation processes that made it possible to go about resolving the cruel armed conflicts that devastated various countries of the region. The participation of the international community, through the significant presence of the United Nations and the useful

work of the mechanism of the Group of Friends, has facilitated, and continues to facilitate, a positive outcome of the peace processes.

Within the framework of the region, the European Union welcomes the positive evaluation, contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/499) of 3 October 1995, of the work of the Support Group for Nicaragua, in which three members of the Union participate. Its task is to follow Nicaragua's transition and to support the process of internal consensus-building, with a view to economic and social development. The elections of October 1996 will be a new and important stage in the consolidation of democracy and the foundations of Nicaragua's reconstruction.

Notwithstanding the achievements made, important measures still need to be adopted in order to consolidate the peace processes in Guatemala and El Salvador.

The elections to be held next 12 November in Guatemala, with the participation of all the political forces and in the spirit of the recent Contadora Declaration, will enable the people of Guatemala to join in the movement of peace, democracy and development that Central America is experiencing. States members of the European Union are sending observers to the elections, and those observers will work in conjunction with the mission of the United Nations and the mission of the Organization of American States.

In the statement made by its Presidency on 12 October, the European Union strongly condemned the tragic events that took place on 5 October in the town of Chisec, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, and demanded that there be an immediate investigation and that those responsible be punished. The European Union appreciates the measures announced by the President of the Republic and is following very closely the investigation being carried out by the United Nations in respect of those events.

The European Union considers that full respect of the population's human rights is essential for the participation of all the people of Guatemala in the elections and for the success of the peace process. Particularly in the rural areas, this means that the Voluntary Civil Defence Committees must refrain from any action that might jeopardize the climate of peace that is necessary for the successful holding of the elections.

The General Assembly recently extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) for an additional period of six months, until 18 March 1996. The European Union considers that, thanks to the mediation efforts and the presence of MINUGUA on the ground, the United Nations is contributing actively and positively to the Guatemalan peace process, helping and encouraging the parties to reach a firm and lasting peace, through national reconciliation, thus making it possible to lay the foundations of democracy and development in a climate of liberty and justice. The European Union urges both parties to comply with their commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and to implement MINUGUA's recommendations.

Just a few days ago, on 31 October 1995, the General Assembly took another important decision, also supported by the European Union: it adopted the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL) for six months. We welcome the cooperation between MINUSAL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the consolidation of the Peace Accords, and we hope that it will be further strengthened during the coming months. As the process proceeds, El Salvador will need to give more emphasis to its long-term development.

The European Union considers this necessary not only because of the important political message of encouragement this decision sends to El Salvador, but also because we are concerned that some elements of the Peace Accords are not being fully implemented and others have been considerably delayed. Swifter progress is needed to avoid undermining the peace process and causing political and social instability.

Even though the overall degree of implementation of the Peace Accords is satisfactory, the final implementation of some very important aspects of the consolidation of peace are still pending, such as the programmes of human settlements and land transfer, as are the reforms necessary in public security and the institutional development of the National Civil Police and the National Public Security Academy, institutions to which the European Union is providing technical and financial assistance.

Also pending is the implementation of recommendations of the Commission on the Truth and the Joint Group relating to reforms in the judicial system

as well as in the electoral field, the speedy implementation of which is essential so that they can be applicable in the coming elections. This would give the democratic system greater credibility.

The European Union has considered the report (A/50/499) of the Secretary-General of 3 October 1995 on the situation in Central America. As Central America advances towards the consolidation and reinforcement of its democratic institutions, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are proving to be appropriate forums for considering the evolution of the region. In this way the various cooperation and integration mechanisms have an opportunity to prove their validity for the benefit of the peoples in the region.

In this context, we want to encourage the Secretary-General to continue to coordinate and stimulate all United Nations organs to assist, through the various ongoing programmes, in the economic and social development of Central America and to support the important initiatives for greater integration being promoted by the countries of the region. In that connection, we take a positive view of the General Assembly's recent granting of observer status to the Central American Integration System.

Of the many initiatives taken, we would like to underline two that we consider particularly important and that show a sincere will for Central American integration.

First, we wish to note the efforts made by the Central American countries with a view to a coherent strategy of development, which is given form in the Alliance for Sustainable Development, with an emphasis on collective efforts to reduce poverty in the isthmus through social integration, human development, investment in human resources and environmental protection.

Secondly, in a region that has suffered years of military tensions, the elaboration of an agreement on regional security issues is commendable. This is currently under discussion, the aim being to define a security model that would make use of democratic institutions to find comprehensive and peaceful solutions to the problems of the region. This initiative reflects important changes in the armed forces, significant changes that put us on the right path to defining a new model for regional defence that respects human rights and strengthens the rule of law and the comprehensive development of human beings and society.

The European Union wishes to reaffirm its determination to continue to support the Central American integration process and the new efforts aimed at stimulating the comprehensive development of the region.

The eleventh annual Ministerial Conference on political dialogue and economic cooperation between the European Union and the States of the San José Group was held in Panama City in February 1995. The participants in the Conference welcomed the progress made in the peace process, in the consolidation of democracy and respect for human rights and in the development and integration of the Central American region. They also stressed the positive effect on the process of 10 years of exceptionally fruitful dialogue between the two regions.

During the months leading up to the Conference, the two sides had a number of contacts and agreed on the necessity to adapt the substance and format of the San José dialogue to the new circumstances created by the profound changes of recent years, both in the European Union and in Central America. The eleventh San José Conference, representing a major step in that direction, was devoted to three topics: sustainable development in Central America, regional integration and the integration of Central America in the international economy and, finally, the future of relations between Central America and the European Union.

The San José dialogue has proved to be a lively mechanism of exchange and mutual understanding between the European Union and the countries of Central America. This dialogue, given the important changes in the region, is serving to reorient and strengthen cooperation with Central America, which will enable us to face together with even greater vitality the challenges of the years to come. The areas we consider particularly important have to do with consolidating the rule of law, strengthening democratic mechanisms, deepening social stabilization and harmoniously introducing the Central American countries into the international economy. In this context, I would like to recall that the European Union and its member States as a whole constitute the primary donor to the cause of cooperation in the region.

The European Union trusts that during this session of the General Assembly Central America will be able to secure the ongoing peace processes in order to consolidate achievements in the quest for lasting peace, democracy and development, and in this endeavour it

should enjoy the assistance, solidarity and encouragement of the international community. The European Union will continue to play an active role in this effort.

**Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to speak on agenda item 45, entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", which is before the Assembly today.

We have studied the report of the Secretary-General on this subject, contained in document A/50/499, and the third report of the Director of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), contained in document A/50/482.

We share the Secretary-General's positive outlook, which is based on the prospect of the region's being free of armed conflicts and effecting institutional changes capable of supporting new programmes of social and economic reforms that will make it possible to consolidate sustainable development. We also welcome the international community's support, as manifested in an active endeavour that includes the United Nations system.

With regard to the latter report, we share the concern over the situation of Guatemala and, in accordance with the declaration of the most recent Ibero-American summit, we support the efforts of its Government and urge the parties to achieve a solid and lasting peace. My country wishes to reiterate its resolute policy of encouragement for the Guatemalan peace process, which has been aptly reflected in our co-sponsorship of resolution 48/267, establishing MINUGUA, and, more recently, of resolution 49/236 B, extending its mandate for six months.

The Central American region is not exempt from the global tendencies emerging since the end of the cold war. It is striving for active regionalization and the consolidation of societies in which peace reigns, freedom is a reality, democracy is the norm and sustainable economic and social development are a real possibility. Its Governments are aware that the search for these values will contribute to the consolidation of a situation of well-being and stability in the region.

For its part, the international community takes note that the Central American region is overcoming a difficult period of internal conflict and entering a new era of institutional reconstruction and economic development. The consolidation of this process calls for solidarity and cooperation, which can be fuelled by financial support, both multilateral and bilateral. Only in this way will it be possible to give impetus to investment and, as a result, growth.

In the context of assistance, it would be particularly desirable to pour in the economic and technical assistance that will be required to face the difficult situations that armed conflicts always leave in their wake.

My country has given concrete proof of its clear commitment to this philosophy, both in the peace processes and in initiatives such as the signing of technical-cooperation agreements in the areas of human resources, agriculture, forest management, fishing and energy, as well as in the renegotiation of external debt — especially public debt. In the conviction that recovery and economic development are essential conditions for the consolidation of peace and democracy in this region, my country has allotted for Central America 46 per cent of the total amount for projects agreed upon through the Argentine fund for horizontal cooperation, making Central America the fund's principal beneficiary worldwide.

We have made concrete contributions to both military and civilian participation in the peace-keeping operations deployed in the region, as well as in the areas of human rights and electoral assistance.

In this spirit, we wish to renew our commitment to the Central American region, whose peoples are such close kin of our own.

**Mr. Fowler** (Canada): Canada values highly the work of the United Nations in assisting the peoples and Governments of Central America in achieving democracy and development. The respect in which the Organization is held in Central America has allowed it to assist the Governments and peoples of Central America to achieve important objectives. Over the last 10 years Canada has supported all of the United Nations initiatives, usually in direct and material ways. We have contributed military and police personnel to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in

Guatemala (MINUGUA). Today, I should like to comment briefly on the Central American peace process, particularly those aspects raised by the Secretary-General in his recent reports under agenda item 45.

We recognize the important progress that has been made in the implementation of the El Salvador peace accords with the assistance of ONUSAL and, since May of this year, of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL). The Secretary-General recently advised us that there was still important work for MINUSAL to do in the verification of the implementation of the remaining commitments. On this basis, Canada co-sponsored resolution A/50/7, approving its intention to extend MINUSAL for a further six months. We believe, however, that MINUSAL must not be extended indefinitely, and we encourage the Government of El Salvador to redouble its efforts to ensure the prompt, transparent and thorough implementation of its commitments under the peace accords.

During the last two years, Canada has participated in the Nicaragua Support Group. We think that this new and very low-cost form of preventive diplomacy has been useful in assisting the Government and people of Nicaragua in conducting a dialogue on critical economic and political issues.

Canada is encouraged by the achievements to date in the Guatemala peace process, but we remain concerned by the slow rate of progress towards a final peace accord. We urge the parties involved in the peace negotiations under the mediation of the United Nations to maintain their commitment and their efforts to advance the process. This will require sufficient flexibility on both sides. It is significant that Guatemala's major political parties have indicated their willingness to implement the accords already signed and to continue the process.

We have read carefully the three reports of the Director of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala on the human rights situation in that country. The positive steps and attitudes reported in the second report were important and encouraging for the peace process in Guatemala. On the other hand, the situation reported in MINUGUA's third report and the subsequent massacre at Xaman, in Alta Verapaz, give rise to renewed concern. We urge the Government of Guatemala and other concerned parties to consider seriously the recommendations of MINUGUA and to work hard to give them effect, particularly with regard to the problem of impunity. For its part, Canada will continue to support MINUGUA and the peace negotiations.

*(spoke in French)*

One of the most encouraging developments in Central America is the continuing trend towards political and institutional cooperation and economic integration reported to us by the Secretary-General. One of the fruits of this process, the Alliance for Sustainable Development, can serve Central Americans as an effective tool in their pursuit of economic and social development and of integration with the global economy. During his meeting with the Central American leaders in San José in January 1995, Prime Minister Chrétien demonstrated his support for the Alliance and other Central American initiatives towards regional cooperation. He has expressed a strong interest in maintaining high-level consultations on this issue.

In the end, the fate of the peace process in Central America lies in the hands of the peoples and Governments of that region. Their achievements and their commitment to peace and to sustainable development are most impressive, but much remains to be done.

I should like to conclude by paying tribute to the efforts towards peace and development in Central America of the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations system. The successes that have been achieved in Central America during the last year owe a great deal to the persistence and hard work of the United Nations.

Canada stands ready to cooperate with the Central American countries and the United Nations in achieving peace and development in this region.

**Mr. Bjørn Lian** (Norway): The situation in Central America has during the last decade changed from conflict and mistrust to democratization and cooperation. There is reason to congratulate the Central Americans on their accomplishments, but at the same time it remains clear that the challenges these countries face are still formidable. It is therefore paramount that they persevere in their efforts towards further normalization, reconstruction and reconciliation. In these endeavours, they can count on the continued support and solidarity of the international community.

Together with the other members of the group of friends, Norway has been actively encouraging the peace process in Guatemala over the past few years. A final

peace agreement has not yet been reached, but it is appropriate to pay tribute to the Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and to the moderator Jean Arnault for their untiring efforts to put an end to an armed conflict which has been exacting its toll from the people of Guatemala for more than 35 years. Several significant partial agreements have been signed since the United Nations gave a new impetus to the negotiations at the beginning of last year, and at this very moment the Government Peace Commission and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) are meeting in Mexico trying to settle the important item of the socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation. Hopefully it will be possible to conclude this partial agreement before the inauguration of the new president in January next year.

While the parties to the conflict meet for a new round of negotiations in Mexico, Guatemala is preparing for elections which hopefully will strengthen the country's democratic institutions. Sectors that traditionally have not taken an active part in the electoral process have on this occasion opted for a more positive approach. The electorate has a wider choice of political alternatives, and the URNG has been encouraging the Guatemalans to take advantage of their right to vote. Their unilateral cease-fire in the two weeks prior to the elections has also been a very constructive measure. It is extremely important that the new president and the major political parties in the new national assembly feel a commitment to the peace process. The Contadora Declaration of August augurs well in that respect, but the victors should be invited to reassure their fellow countrymen and the international community about their favourable attitude after the elections also.

The establishment and deployment of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights (MINUGUA) represents a significant step forward in the peace process. The presence of MINUGUA has given renewed hope to the civilian population that peace, justice, reconstruction and reconciliation may become a reality in Guatemala, but the mission can be a success only if the authorities act sincerely and wholeheartedly on the MINUGUA recommendations.

Norway, for its part, has stepped up considerably its assistance to Guatemala over the past two years, with a projected total in 1995 of roughly $11 million, which is slightly higher than last year. A contribution to MINUGUA of $1 million is especially aimed at reforms in the judicial system and translation to Mayan languages and distribution of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Special priority continues to be given to projects related to democratization and political development and to particularly vulnerable groups, with special emphasis on the indigenous population. Norway has also made a point of establishing good contacts with all relevant actors in the social and political landscape of Guatemala and we have made clear to the negotiating parties that we are prepared to contribute further to specific peace-related needs that may arise during the negotiating process.

The Government Peace Commission and the URNG now seem to have a realistic approach to the peace negotiations. It is imperative that the various sectors of Guatemalan society display the same constructive spirit, including those that may have to renounce some of their privileges in order to create a better tomorrow for all Guatemalans. Peace is a necessary first step before the entire people of Guatemala can join efforts in this noble venture. Massive participation in the elections on Sunday would be encouraging testimony to the fact that the Guatemalans, through peaceful and democratic means, are ready to take their destiny in their own hands. And the United Nations and the Group of Friends will continue to be the firmest allies of a Guatemala that is staking its future on peace and reconciliation.

The signature of the Chapultepec Peace Agreement in El Salvador in 1993 initiated a fruitful process of peace-building in that country to which the United Nations has contributed substantially. For Norway, it has been natural to participate in and contribute to the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL) as well as in the training of the new National Civil Police of El Salvador.

Important parts of the Chapultepec Agreement are, however, still not fully accomplished. This is notably the case for such matters as the distribution of land and judicial and electoral reforms. We therefore hope that the Government of El Salvador will take the necessary measures to assure the implementation of the Peace Agreement in letter as well as in spirit.

In its evaluation of the public security sector, MINUSAL is reporting a number of problems in the new National Civil Police as well as in the Police Academy. We believe that a well-organized, independent police force that respects human rights is fundamental for the further consolidation of the peace process in EL Salvador. The recommendations and time limits given by MINUSAL in its report should be complied with by the Salvadoran authorities.

The conflict between the Nicaraguan Government and the National Assembly seemed to have been resolved in June this year. The cooperation between the two national institutions can, however, still be improved. Norway would like to see greater stress being laid on the importance of political dialogue to avoid future constitutional crises, and we urge the parties to resolve the remaining problems. Economic and social development is only possible when the political situation is stable, and such stability is the common responsibility of all political parties and institutions in Nicaragua.

Free and democratic elections in 1996 will signify a worthy end to the first transition period after the civil war. Norway hopes that elections will be held as programmed in October next year so that a new President and a new Government can initiate the second stage of the democratic transition in January 1997.

Nicaragua has managed to reduce substantially its commercial foreign debt and bilateral debt. Hopefully, this lessening of the debt burden will improve the economic situation of the country. Nicaragua will, however, still need support from the international community to be able to develop further. Nicaragua is Norway's only programme country in Latin America, and is the most important recipient of Norwegian development assistance on the continent. Bilateral assistance will amount to approximately $27 million in 1995. We are prepared to maintain the assistance to Nicaragua, but would like to emphasize that international assistance can only be a supplement to national efforts to assure continued positive social and economic progress in the country.

**Mr. Laing** (Belize): In the same way as the Belize delegation did last year, as a good neighbour we must lend our full support to draft resolution A/50/L.17 on the situation in Central America. We are happy to observe that during the past 12 months our delicate, filigreed isthmus has remained largely stable. In no small measure, this is due to the strenuous efforts of persons of good will in Central America as well as to the labours of the Secretary-General of this Organization.

We are grateful, too, that the flood of displaced persons crossing the subregion's borders for safety and greater prosperity from some areas has been stemmed. Regrettably, from some other areas the tide continues, with serious effects on host countries, including mine.

Yet, overall, we are quite optimistic at the rate of progress in the subregion. Belize continues to participate in some of the efforts of cooperation in the region, especially vicariously through the development administration of Belize by the Central American offices of some United Nations agencies and through participation in the "San José Process", which has now happily resumed for Belize. We are also enthusiastic participants in the Alliance for Sustainable Development.

However, regrettably, the documentation sometimes does not adequately reflect the fact of our active involvement. I refer to aspects of document A/50/L.17 and of A/50/499.

We are convinced, however, that in due course Belize will take its rightful place as the bridge between the isthmus and the wider Caribbean spaces now epitomized by the Association of Caribbean States. We suggest that Central America's economic future and social upliftment will be enhanced by harnessing the region's competitive advantages in the globalization process. Belize's stable political order and institutions, and its official language, are assets in this regard. We pledge to put them to the full use of the isthmus and of the wider Caribbean.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that in order to allow the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to review the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/50/L.17, action on the draft resolution will be taken at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

**Organization of work**

**The President:** I should like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

I have requested His Excellency Mr. Ernst Sucharipa of Austria, who ably coordinated the informal consultations on draft resolutions under this item during the forty-ninth session, to assist me in the same capacity this session, and he has graciously accepted. May I request those delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under agenda item 20 to do so as early as possible in order to allow time, if need be, for

negotiations, with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions.

In this connection, I should like to inform Members that the first meeting of the informal consultations on this item will be held on 14 November, as will be announced in the *Journal*.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.*